

T H E
CHILDREN'S FRIEND;

CONSISTING OF
APT TALES, SHORT DIALOGUES,
AND MORAL DRAMAS;
ALL INTENDED

To engage ATTENTION, cherish FEELING,
and inculcate VIRTUE, in

THE RISING GENERATION.

TRANSLATED BY

The Rev. MARK ANTHONY MEILAN,
From the FRENCH of M. BERQUIN.

V O L. XIV.

L O N D O N :

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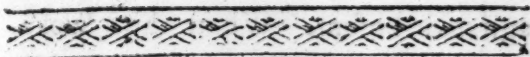
WAR AND PEACE.

ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS.

THE RETURN FROM AMERICA.



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WAR AND PEACE.

COLONEL Nicol, recently arriv'd from India, to respire in peace, with all his family about him, could not close his eyes, the first night after his arrival, till towards break of day, for thinking of the pleasure he had tasted, in embracing his dear wife and children, after such an absence ; but at last, a grateful slumber stole upon

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him, and soft dreams compos'd his agitated bosom. When he 'woke, which was not till the heat of noon was over, the first objects he beheld about him, were his children, who had plac'd themselves around his bed, in expectation of his waking. He receiv'd their sweet carresses, clasped them tenderly himself, and putting on his things, as quickly as he could, went down into the garden with them.

The serenity then reigning round about, the pleasure of revisiting those places his own hands had cultivated in times past, the joys of being once again restor'd in safety to his family, when such an interval of separation

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had elapsed, and even the recollection of the dangers he had often been expos'd to, every thing inspir'd him with unspeakable affection; and his children, sensible of this, employ'd the opportunity, to ask him question after question.

He related every thing worth knowing, that had happen'd in his long and tedious voyage, from and back again to England, and the battles he had been concern'd in. He describ'd the extended countries he had march'd thro', and the numerous nations he had seen, together with their customs, characters, and manners.

During his recital, he was careful to take note, what sort of feelings it

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excited in their hearts, and what was the expression of those feelings in their countenances. At the slightest mention of the dangers he had run, he felt the little girls, by instinct as it were, press tenderly his knee; they sigh'd, and now and then let fall a tear; while Constantine, his son, was animated, and seem'd ready, or at least his features spoke him ready, to enfront the same degree of danger. In particular, a species of impatience sat upon his countenance, when he was told what fights his father had been present at.

Papa, at length he cried, if I were but as big as you, how I should like to go to war, that in my turn, I might appear as brave a man as you.

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The COLONEL,

But Constantine, you know not
what a cruel wish you yield to:

CONSTANTINE.

What, Papa! and don't you mean
I shall in future be a soldier?

The COLONEL.

Yes, I do indeed.

CONSTANTINE.

And is not the profession of a soldier
necessary?

The COLONEL.

Too much so; I must confess. 'Tis
with a kingdom just the same as with a
human body. Both are subject to interior
maladies, and outward accidents. The doctor watches carefully
the body, to prevent complaints

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within it, that might happen thro' the fermentation of sharp humours, or to save it from those ills it might without sustain, from hurtful objects. Just so likewise, does the soldier watch the state, of which ~~the~~ he is a member, to suppress seditions, that might rise within it, and repel the invasion of ambitious nations, dwelling round about it.

CONSTANTINE.

But, Papa, if the profession of a soldier be so necessary, ought not I to wish for opportunities of exercising it?

THE COLONEL.

What would you think of that physician, who impress'd with a desire of practising his art, should wish a dangerous malady, a plague for in-

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stance' sake, or something like it, should befall his fellow-creatures.

CONSTANTINE.

O, Papa, how wicked!

The COLONEL.

What then should I think of him, who to assuage, or satisfy a principle of pride, or else ambition, should desire the greatest scourge that can attend on human nature, might lay waste his country?

HARRIOTT.

Ah, Constantine, think of that, and let's see what you'll answer.

CONSTANTINE.

And yet war, Papa, is quite delightful, and particularly if one were a king.

The COLONEL.

In what then, do you think it so delightful ?

CONSTANTINE.

In the first place, because then a king may make himself more powerful.

The COLONEL.

But be it granted, kings may have recourse to war with justice, when they wish to have more power, do you imagine, that in prudence they should do so; that is, go to war? Suppose within yourselves, dear children, that the lands about my own estate here, are as many little empires, and their owners, Mr. Marchmont and the rest, as many kings within them.

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HARRIOTT.

Aye, as those of France and England,
Do you understand?

CONSTANTINE.

Don't be uneasy, sister, upon my
account. I understand extremely
well. Pray, dear Papa, go on.

The COLONEL.

If I prevail upon my tenants to
take arms, and if they can obtain
possession of a field belonging, as I
said just now, to Mr. Marchmont, is
it not quite likely Mr. Marchmont
then will give his tenants arms, and
beg them to defend that field, which
they must know, is his? and very
possibly, encourage them to seize on
something that belongs to me?

EMILY.

Yes, that's quite natural.

THE COLONEL.

If so, then I am plung'd into a sea of trouble, and must always be upon the watch, that I may rob my neighbour, or prevent his robbing me. Of which, the consequence is this ; that if I prosper, I must reasonably fear my neighbours will conspire together to impede my further violences ; and divide my spoils, if I am beaten.

CONSTANTINE.

Aye, Papa ; but then, the glory you would gain, by letting all the neighbours see how brave you are ?

THE COLONEL.

I understand you : and to gain this glory, which at best is but imagi-

nary, I shall go and hazard the repose and life of those, I ought to look on as my children? But 'tis very possible, my neighbour may be braver by a deal than I. What then shall I have gain'd by this fantastic wish of glory?

CONSTANTINE.

As I take it, you should previously provide yourself with such a force, as to be sure of conquest.

THE COLONEL.

I might still reply, by hinting that my neighbour certainly would take the same advantages; might possibly be more successful, and so make my enterprising disposition cost me dear at last. But for the sake of argument, I'll grant, Constantine, fortune fa-

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vours me, and my estate is much enlarged: alas, this very circumstance, 'tis very likely, may become my ruin.

CONSTANTINE.

How, Papa! methinks you would become the richer for it. With a greater quantity of land, you would have much more money coming in.

THE COLONEL.

Ah, Constantine! 'tis not on the size of an estate, its worth depends: but on the care one takes to cultivate it.

HARRIOTT.

Certainly: for only think of Wilton heath, where Mr. Angel lives. Why, no one in his senses would give

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up a quarter part of such a little orchard as we have, for all that heath.

EMILY.

I easily believe you: Wilsdon heath produces only furze and brambles, while our orchard has a deal of fruit.

CONSTANTINE.

But what would hinder you from cultivating all the land you might have taken from your neighbour?

THE COLONEL.

If I have before-hand lost in the dispute, a number of my tenants, and a portion of the rest are still employ'd in arms, who then will cultivate my fields? I shall have notwithstanding in the interval to feed those men, who have forsaken agriculture, and

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instead, are occupied in laying waste the ground they tread on. Now to feed them, I must put fresh burdens upon those that still remain employ'd in cultivating my estate, and make them pay me larger rents. If I impose upon them, they will leave their farms, and chuse more kind and peaceful landlords, than myself. Of course, I shall have none about me, but arm'd tenants, who, if ever they conceive themselves ill treated, will be likely to conspire against me.

CONSTANTINE.

I have read indeed such things in history : my tutor, very lately, I remember, pointed one out to me.

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The COLONEL.

Let us now, upon the other hand, suppose, Constantine, that instead of vexing any of the nations round me; for I drop the idea of a landlord, and speak as if I were the king of England, and alluded to the king of France; suppose, I say, instead of vexing any of the king of France's subjects, I should do my utmost to attach them to me, by a commerce, advantageous both to them and my own people, and by being scrupulously careful to prevent whatever might occasion, for the time to come, division and dispute, between us; and should give encouragement, within my own dominions, to the arts of

18 *WAR AND PEACE.*

agriculture, so that every one I govern, might enjoy, if he thought fit, the sweets of peace, and that serenity which always flows from justice, should I not be happier, thro' the happiness of every one about me, than from any boast of having conquer'd? And in that case, would not my dominion be establish'd on a much more solid base, than if I had enlarg'd its limits, when the consequence must be, that every part becomes much weaker?

CONSTANTINE.

But, Papa, don't you remember, you compar'd, just now a kingdom to a human body. If a human body then, as mine, grows stronger every day, as it grows bigger, sure a king-

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dom must become more powerful, in proportion as its size increases.

The COLONEL.

So it would do, I confess; if that increase were carried forward, as it is in nature, by a slow and gradual rate, and not in consequence of sudden revolutions.

CONSTANTINE.

Pray, explain this last particular.

The COLONEL.

I'll make it clearly understood, by what I saw take place, between a little boy and girl, on board the ship in which I came to England.

CONSTANTINE.

What you saw take place between a little boy and girl? I can't con-

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ceive how any thing like that can be of use in settling this affair !

THE COLONEL.

One evening, their mama gave each of them a piece of cake ; the girl was less a great deal than her brother, and had notwithstanding very near as large a piece. The boy remark'd that circumstance, and snatch'd her share away. Now what do you imagine, lead him to this action of injustice ?

CONSTANTINE.

I suppose he thought it wrong his sister, being less than he, should have a piece, almost as large ?

EMILY.

O, what a mighty man !

The COLONEL.

Exactly such is the pretext assign'd in general by all conquerors. But what happen'd to the little boy? When he had finish'd eating he grew sick. The aliments we swallow, being meant to strengthen us, 'tis very natural to fancy that the more we take, the stronger we shall be: so also 'tis not monstrous for a child to fancy, that a prince, whose territories are increased, should find his power increas'd as well. But in reality, 'tis with a kingdom just as with our stomach. Being over-charged, it must be out of order. If the little boy had been contented with the piece he had receiv'd; for you must know, he was an ailing child,

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and therefore had not so much as his sister, who was very hearty, it would have digested properly, and strengthened him, whereas, by eating more than he could bear, it had the effect upon him I have just now mention'd. If his sister, following the example he had set her, had proceeded upon this, to take away his bit of cake by force, as little as she was, he would not then have had sufficient strength to save it from her.

CONSTANTINE.

But perhaps, he would have thought of the injustice he had done, and yielded it without a struggle?

THE COLONEL.

That's a generosity of which the common sort of conquerors are not

capable to one another. If they were but so, in favour of their subjects only, how could they reflect upon the multitude of victims they must sacrifice upon the altar of their vengeance or ambition, the first time they combat with the people they have made their enemies, and not be struck with horror at the thought? I should imagine 'twould be well, if kings, upon the point of undertaking any war, should have a picture hung before them, setting forth the horrors of that war, so that their minds might be incessantly affected at the recollection of it; and at midnight, when all nature otherwise is still about them, hear the groans of wounded men reproaching them,

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as the occasion of those pains they suffer, the despairing cries of wives and mothers, loading them with curses, and the clamours of a people famishing for want of bread. Their souls are sometimes wrought on, by unjust solicitations, to grant criminals their life; and yet they sign without remorse, what shall condemn to death even thousands of their unoffending subjects. A good king employs whole years in meditating on a project, that may finally prove beneficial to some portion of his state, to population, trade, or agriculture. Twenty years shall pass away before the project is perfectionated; while a warlike, that is, cruel king shall, by the resolution of a moment, half exterminate his people,

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put a stop to culture, tie up the industrious hands of artizans, deprive the poor of their subsistence, by depriving them of daily work, reduce whole families to dissolution, and at last entirely overthrow his realm!

CONSTANTINE.

And yet Papa, I've often heard great fortunes have been made by hundreds in the time of war.

THE COLONEL.

And this is an addition to the evils it foment; for not to speak of those antipathies, the inequality of wealth produces in the hearts of such as are each other's neighbours, those enormous fortunes cherish a degree of luxury that cannot but corrupt men's manners to the last excess. The pomp

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with which it is surrounded, the enjoyment it procures, the shameful deference or respect men dare not, if they would, refuse it, stimulate the generality of those who are upon an equal footing in regard to rank with the luxurious, but less wealthy—to affect it with the same indecency, that they may either satisfy their pride, or keep up their respectability. They waste their real wealth, in keeping up their luxury, that they may gain possession of that shadowy wealth they fancy they *shall* get. Intimidated by the dread of their approaching ruin, if they do not hasten to prevent it by unlawful methods, they embark in dangerous enterprises, and expose not only what they have, but what, *as*

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many as the hope of a fallacious profit will inveigle to be partners in their schemes, may trust them with. Their ruin is at last announc'd; but the example will not terrify cupidity, that always hopes to prosper more than others, by employing subtler artifices. And as soon as probity is given up, then mutual trust is banish'd, and a nation's commerce perishes thro' the excess of that abundance it created.

CONSTANTINE.

But if any land grows rich by peace, should we not always have sufficient cause to fear the same misfortune?

The COLONEL.

Not at all. 'Tis only suddenly made fortunes that intoxicate the

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mind of their possessors, and excite them to abuse the fortunes they have got together. Riches, gradually gain'd, or in the ordinary course of commerce, are in consequence of many years consum'd in toil. Men hardly ever dissipate the treasure they have labour'd hard to get; but lay it by, to serve them in the wearisome condition of old age. Besides, their fortunes are, in that case, much more equable, and every one is rich, while no one overflows with wealth. The country, having far less wants in that serenity 'tis blest'd with, is not under the necessity of grinding the laborious husbandman; but, on the other hand, is able to encourage him, in furnishing the trading part of the com-

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community with those supplies of corn, and other vegetables it requires.— An empire strengthen'd thus by trade and agriculture, may give laws to other empires, even on account of its tranquillity. It's neighbours fear it, and instead of making inroads on a people that must be too powerful for them, seek alliance with that people. This alliance draws mankind together, roots out national antipathies, and kindles sentiments of unity and concord in their stead. The prince has only to prevent abuses in the state. A perfect legislation causes justice and strict order to prevail among his people; and they pass from individuals to whole states. Trade, arts, and sciences, may be compar'd

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to bridges, that proceed from one to t'other, and on which not only peace but plenty constantly walk to and fro that they may keep inviolate the happiness of those they have united.

CONSTANTINE.

I conceive your meaning pretty clearly : yet, in case there be no war then soldiers are unnecessary, and my regiment must be broke before I join it ?

THE COLONEL.

Not so fast, Constantine ; for an undefended state would be expos'd, by reason of it's riches, to a multitude of enemies. It should keep up a regulated force in peace, if it would have one in the time of war. But the instead of looking on, an unconcern

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spectator, while the military quench their spirit in debauchery and sloth, it should assign them labours to keep up their strength, and make them useful to the state. They should be station'd on the public roads, and such as are employ'd at present on them, never quit the plow and sickle : an additional connection would, in that case, forcibly unite them to their country, in that natural propensity men feel to value, what their industry in some sort has created, and the pride with which they are at all times ready to defend it. The superior officer, who should direct their labours, would not, we must own, observe his name recorded in the papers of the day, and no where else,

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for trifling enterprizes, such as history descends not to perpetuate ; but would himself engrave it on a pillar rais'd upon the spot, where once ascended a high hill he should have level'd ; on the side of a canal or post he should have dug ; or at the opening of a bridge he should have built. The traveller then would come from the remotest part of Europe to consider the magnificence and boldness of his toil, his countrymen would bless the benefits ensuing from it, and a generation not then born, in future time rise up, and wonder at its durability. The colour of his coat no longer would excite one thought of bloodshed, but of gratitude for
justly

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justly due to benefits ; and of respect invariably pay'd to ingenuity. His leisure moments would be spent in the extension of those sciences he should before have cultivated, and suggesting plans of policy, resulting from his observations made in different provinces. Retiring in the end, to pass away the residue of life on his estate with honour, in the recollection of those benefits he had communicated to his country, his activity would flourish still in agriculture. I even dare propose myself as an example. I'm inclin'd to think, I have been serviceable to my king in India ; but shall much more boast of benefiting for the time to come my native

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land by cultivating the inheritance a father left me, and by giving you, my children, a becoming education. I shall do my utmost to atone for that involuntary violence I may have done humanity, by henceforth being a protector of the needy round about me; and I hope, I shall not die without the conscious satisfaction a good citizen enjoys, in having carefully discharg'd his duty.

CONSTANTINE.

What you say, Papa, appears to me quite reasonable. Why then do not all men think as you do?

THE COLONEL.

Why, Constantine, but because they have unfortunately been brought up in prejudices, and not had suffi-

WAR AND PEACE. 35

cient resolution to correct them? Hitherto, philosophers have spoke to none but those, whose understandings could not see the truth and beauty of those principles which I have happily been taught. Nor is there any hope that men, now come to years of reason and reflection, should be taught to see them! so that those philosophers must get new pupils. 'Tis in infancy, the future man must be prepar'd. By giving him betimes a tincture of integrity, beneficence and generosity, he will obtain, in his maturity, the habit of displaying them in every action of his life; and place his glory in contributing, as far as he is able, to that general revolution so much to

36 *WAR AND PEACE.*

be wished for, in behalf of virtue.

A young prince possessed of these exalted notions, and persuaded that the rising generation have them too, might rationally hope to govern a new sort of people, who would certainly afford a model to all other lands. Congratulate yourselves, dear children, on the circumstance of being born in those auspicious times, when children are, not only here, but universally throughout all Europe, the peculiar objects whose felicity philosophers are studying to promote; and not they only, but even women.—Women, notwithstanding narrow - mindedness delights at all times to disparage, as it does, their understanding. Possibly for you and your contemporaries,

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is reserv'd the happiness of seeing the last traces of injustice and barbarity effac'd among mankind. Thrice happy I, myself, if giving now these first ideas of a system of morality, so simple but sublime, I take but one step forward, in the business of establishing this system in your hearts. You will do all you can to second my endeavours, by communicating my instruction to your future children.

*ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE
TO PARENTS.*

EUPHRASIA, (*to her doll,*)

WELL, Miss Obstinate! you won't then, I suppose, do what I bid you? You'll be always with your neck as stiff, as if you were a *sentry* in St. James's park. Hold up your head! and look at me! See how I put my neck, — There. — Don't you think

ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE, &c. 39

that's charming! O, you're mighty dull this morning. Take care, Miss, however, and don't put me in a passion; or depend upon it I shall be as angry with you, as Mama was yesterday with me, for beating Pompey.

Mrs. MASON, (*having heard a few of these last words,*)

Why, you seem quite serious! Has your doll then fail'd in her behaviour towards you?

EUPHRASIA.

I am showing her what airs and graces would become her; and she won't even hear me.

Mrs. MASON.

I confess, it cannot but displease

40 *ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE*

one, that such salutary counsel should be thrown away. However, you were speaking, I believe, of being angry.

EUPHRASIA.

O, no, no, Mama: I was but finding fault;—but very likely you heard every thing I said?

Mrs. MASON.

Suppose I did not hear a syllable; and let me know what you were saying to her. Is it possible you can object that I should know your little secrets?

EUPHRASIA.

No, Mama, I cannot. I am sensible young ladies, on the other hand,

TO PARENTS. 41

should have no secrets between them and their Mama.

Mrs. MASON.

Well said, my little heart! and therefore tell me, word for word, as well as you are able, every thing you told your doll.

EUPHRASIA.

Well then, Mama, she would not hold her head a little thus, upon one side, and I was telling her, if she refus'd to follow my directions, I would be as angry with her, as you were with me last night for beating Pompey.

Mrs. MASON.

You suppose then I was angry with you?

42 *ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE*

EUPHRASIA.

I imagin'd, when I saw you looking at me, it was not as you were us'd to do; and therefore I suppos'd so.

Mrs. MASON.

No; it was not anger, it was sadness. In the first place, I was sorry you could have a heart to hurt your dog; and in the next place, I was apprehensive Pompey might avenge himself, if you went on to strike him without mercy: if you recollect, I told you so; and as you seem'd to be so much offended at my admonitions, I was fearful you would shew yourself quite disobedient in the end; on which account I was so much afflicted,

TO PARENTS. 43

that I could not but shed tears. You saw I did; and therefore you suppos'd me in a passion.—In a passion!—out upon the word! I should have been as faulty in respect to you, as you were in respect to Pompey.

EUPHRASIA.

But you are not angry then, Mama, at what I told my doll?

Mrs. MASON.

Well; not a word of being angry: but respecting certain airs of coquetry you wish'd to teach your doll, and even gave a pattern of yourself—I should be glad to touch on that a little.

EUPHRASIA.

I suppos'd they set me off to great

44 *ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE*

advantage ; for Miss Humphreville, not long since, told me so.

Mrs. MASON.

I think I ought to know that better than Miss Humphreville ; and I assure you, I am not at all of her opinion.

EUPHRASIA.

Yet I practised something of that kind, Mama, before my looking-glass last night, and thought it mightily became me.

Mrs. MASON.

You imagine, then, such twists and monkey tricks are worth the native grace of childhood ! 'Tis quite plain, then, you don't know to what they tend ?

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EUPHRASIA.

To what, pray ? Tell me.

Mrs. MASON.

Why, to nothing less, Euphrasia, than to make you give into the habit of an odious affectation, and to have a hypocritical a heart as carriage.

EUPHRASIA.

Bless me ! is that true, Mama ? I'm very glad, then, I was drawn to this conversation on the subject ; without it, I should certainly have been in the risque of falling into such a one, without intending it.

Mrs. MASON.

And I, Euphrasia, full of confidence

46 ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE

in your ingenuous candour, should not very likely have perceived it, till the malady had made so great a progress as to render difficult the application of a proper remedy. You see, then, what consequence it is to pay no manner of attention to the instructions children, hardly more experienced than yourself, may give; but rather to consult *me* always, when you want advice.

EUPHRASIA.

Yes, yes, Mama; I promise you I will, since you will give me good instruction. How should I in future fear were you to charge me with this vice of affectation, as you know you have done with respect to other faults, shall I

company? They have been always trifling faults; and yet, to be reprov'd in public for them, sham'd me: but for affectation—Oh, I verily believe, to be accus'd of that would kill me with confusion.

Mrs. MASON.

I have sometimes been oblig'd to take this method of a public accusation, that the lesson I design'd you, might impress itself more deeply; but believe me, we may strike a plan out that will save you, for the time to come, all such humiliation,

EUPHRASIA.

Ah, Mama, how good you are! I shall be glad to have it.

48 *ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE*

Mrs. MASON.

Then the plan is, to obey me at the slightest nod I give, when any thing is to be done, or left undone. - You will do well to think within yourself, and find out, if you can, the reason of my prohibition or command; but if you cannot find it out, be notwithstanding that, obedient; and the first time we're alone, come then and ask me. I shall very willingly explain my reason.

EUPHRASIA.

Ah, Mama, your plan's indeed a very clever one; and I shall save myself a deal of care by following it.

Per

TO PARENTS. 49

Perfuated of the wisdom of this plan, Euphrasia never ventur'd for the future upon any the least doubtful action, without first consulting her Mama. She came at last to understand the slightest token from her, and could tell what it was proper she should do, in circumstances of embarrassment. The tender admonition of the mother, and her own reflections, gradually gave her such experience, as was far above her age; and all that knew her, were as much surpriz'd as captivated with the prudence of her conduct, and the ripeness of her understanding. At the age of twelve she was possessed of all the hap-

50 *ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE*, &c.
piness to be enjoy'd on earth, the inward satisfaction of her own approving heart, the attachment of her friends, and the affection of her parents.

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T H E
RETURN FROM AMERICA.

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS.

D 2

CHARACTERS.

Colonel and Mrs. CHARLTON.

FLAVIA,	}	<i>their children.</i>
PENELOPE,		
EMMA,		
EDMUND,		

COURTENAY, *Edmund's preceptor.*

JASPER, Father and Son, gardeners.

SPRINGFIELD, *the Colonel's tenant.*

PEASANTS, CHILDREN, &c.

*The scene is in a park and garden at the
Colonel's, by the sea; suppos'd at
Plymouth.*



T H E
RETURN FROM AMERICA.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

-The Two JASPERS.

Old JASPER, (*raking, while the son
runs to him out of breath,*)

WELL, what's the matter? where
would you be running? D 3

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Young JASPER.

Ah, dear father, save me! I am
dead and buried!

Old JASPER.

'Tis, however, happy you can tell
me so: but what's the matter then?

Young JASPER.

A ghost! a ghost!

Old JASPER.

A ghost, you simpleton, at noon!
I fancy you would make a fool of me!
and what's it like? a man or beast?

Young JASPER.

He's like—a man.

Old JASPER.

He is a man then, blockhead. Has
he not a head, mouth, eyes, feet,
hands?

FROM AMERICA. 55

Young JASPER.

Yes, yes; a head, mouth, eyes, feet, hands, as we have; and yet not as we have.

Old JASPER.

Heyday! and who taught you all this Irish? As we have! and not as we have!

Young JASPER.

Oh, if you had seen it! Heaven forgive me, 'tis the ghost, I'd lay my life on't, of a Turk!

Old JASPER, (*a little frighten'd,*)

A Turk!

Young JASPER.

Yes, father: don't you recollect you show'd me one at London, selling slippers in the street? Well, then, this

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ghost's not much unlike him. A long robe that sweeps the ground! a muff upon his head! a kitchen knife tied round his middle! a grey beard; and then a frightful face above it! (*A noise is heard behind the hedge.*) Bless us, here he comes! 'tis he! 'tis he! the ghost! the Turk! run, father, for your life: he's close upon you. (*He flies like lightning down the walk.*)

Old JASPER, (*more alarm'd,*)

Jasper! Jasper! would you run away, and leave your father then? Come back. (*He runs after Young Jasper; but his rake falls from him, and he stumbles over it, and therefore cannot catch him.*) The little coward! to be off, and leave me all alone! If it were true, how-

FROM AMERICA. 57

ever! I'm not us'd to ghosts, and more particularly ghosts from Turkey! Oh, I'll not stay here, and wait his coming! (*As he stoops to pick his rake up, Colonel Charlton, in a flowing robe and turban, with a mask, draws near, and placks him by the sleeve. Old Jasper sees him, and attempts to run; but being held, cries out,*)

Help! help! murder! fire! a ghost! a Turk!

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SCENE II.

Old JASPER, Col. CHARLTON.

Col. CHARLTON, (*stopping Jasper's mouth,*)

WELL, Jasper, don't be such a child. There's nothing that need scare you thus. Look at me: don't you know me?

Old JASPER, (*without looking at him,*)

Know you! Satan only knows you! Let me go. I'm none of your acquaintance.

Col. CHARLTON.

O, I see the reason. (*Pulling off*

FROM AMERICA. 59

his mask.) There, my friend, you need not now fear looking at me.

Old JASPER, (*with both hands before his face,*)

At that frightful face of yours?
Be gone, and leave me; or I'll cry
out ten times louder.

Col. CHARLTON, (*striving to pull down his hands,*)

What are you afraid of, Jasper?
Is it possible?

Old JASPER.

Avaunt.—You mean to roast me.
How you burn!

Col. CHARLTON, (*separating Jasper's hands,*)

But are you really turn'd fool? and
don't you know my voice?

60 THE RETURN

Old JASPER.

Oh, yes ; I know 'tis fit to make
one die with horror.

Col. CHARLTON.

Well then, look a little at me,
thro' your fingers only.

Old JASPER.

So I may, perhaps ;—but stand a
good way off.

Col. CHARLTON, (*goes back a little,*)

Here then ; will that please you ?

Old JASPER, (*goes back himself,*)

Are you ten yards off at least ?—

Stay then—. (*He ventures now to take
a peep,*) What do I see ? and is it
you, sir ?

Col. CHARLTON.

Yes, dear Jasper, is it ; your old
master, as you see.

FROM AMERICA. 61

Old JASPER, (*half uncovering his face,*)

But, are you sure you're not his ghost?

Col. CHARLTON.

And are you sure you're Jasper?
for I don't know you, that us'd to be
so valiant!

Old JASPER, (*quite uncovering his face,*)

Yes, yes, indeed! I see 'tis you! (*fall-
ing down before him,*) my dear, good
master! Pardon me for not at first
remembering you. (*He rises.*) Would
you believe it? 'Twas my blockhead
of a son, that would have scar'd me,
if he could. (*Beginning to swagger.*)

A ghost! O yes, as if old Jasper was
afraid of ghosts! But where the deuce,
sir, did you get that cap, as if you
did not know 'tis sinful to make sport

62 THE RETURN

in such a heathen dress? Suppose you should be chang'd into a Turk indeed, for all your life to come; for look you, I remember my poor mother told me fifty thousand times, she knew a person that once heard another tell her, he had seen a woman, that was well acquainted with a family—(*the Colonel smiles,*) O, what I'm going now to tell you, is quite true.

Col. CHARLTON.

Well, Jasper, you shall tell me any thing you please to-morrow: but at present, I have other things to mind.
—Are we alone?

Old JASPER.

Yes, yes; here's none but you and I; for as to *hair-brains* there, he'll not come back. He's frighten'd! and

FROM AMERICA. 63

yet only think! you needed but have been a ghost; he'd willingly have let you twist my neck off.

Col. CHARLTON.

Are my wife, my children and the tutor here?

Old JASPER.

O yes; they had intended to go up to London; but now stay to have a festival *al fresco*, as they say, on your return; the peace between America and England being sign'd. O, how rejoic'd they'll be to see you!—Stay, stay, blockhead as I am! why don't I run and tell them you're arriv'd? and spread it after thro' the town?—So, sir, I'll go up to the house.

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Col. CHARLTON, (*detaining him,*)

A little patience, Jasper; that's the very thing I would not have you do.

Old JASPER.

How, master! would you have the festival delay'd? for 'tis on your account alone put off.

Col. CHARLTON.

And we will have it very soon; don't be uneasy.

Old JASPER.

My stars! we would not be without it, though for your arrival only; even had there been no peace. You are so good a master! and so much belov'd by all the country round about us! all the bells should be by this time

FROM AMERICA. 65

set a going!—Are the ringers dead?
I think so!

Col. CHARLTON.

Once more, my dear Jasper, have
a little patience. I'll appear when
there's a proper time.

Old JASPER.

Ah, master! 'tis quite easy say-
ing so. But I shall burst with ab-
solute impatience, if you're long to
be conceal'd.

Col. CHARLTON.

And I shall die, for fear you should
reveal me. Don't deprive your master
of the pleasure he has promis'd he
shall have on his return. You would
not surely have me turn you off for
babbling?

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66 THE RETURN

Old JASPER.

Turn me off? Oh! oh! if that would be the case, I'll be as mute, good master, as a mackarel. 'Tis however very wrong in you, to keep us, for a moment's time, uneasy. We suppos'd you drowned in your passage home. You don't know what a many sighs your absence, after so much expectation, has already cost us. Oh, my worthy master! had we actually lost you, and, instead of this same festival, been forc'd to put on crape and mourning!—the idea only makes me shudder!—we would rather have had war these ten years more, than lost you.

Col. CHARLTON.

How these artless tokens of your

FROM AMERICA. 69.

love rejoice me, Jasper! they before-hand tell me, I shall have a deal of pleasure, when I see my wife and children.

Old JASPER.

Well, sir, why then won't you see them instantly?

Col. CHARLTON.

No, no; I tell you. I'll increase their pleasure by surprising them. So Jasper, for the present, only let me see the tutor.

Old JASPER.

Mr. Courtenay?

Col. CHARLTON.

Yes: I wrote, before I left New-York, to let him know, he might expect me much about this time. Your-

68 THE RETURN

self and Mr. Courtenay only, are to know of my arrival, for a day or two perhaps. But hush! I hear a tread that's coming this way. I'll go hide myself. Remember, you're by all means to be secret. (*He retires behind the hedge.*)

Old JASPER, (*alone,*)

Secret! 'Tis an easy matter to be secret, when a body has not any thing to say! but when one knows what I know? Ah I burn already, I perceive I do, to tell this mighty mystery. (*He discerns the tutor,*) And Heaven be prais'd! here's some one sent for me to talk with.

FROM AMERICA. 69

SCENE III.

Old JASPER, Mr. COURTENAY.

Old JASPER, (*running up to Mr. Courtenay,*)

GIVE you joy! joy! joy! my good dear Mr. Courtenay. We have got him! he's come home! my worthy master! Yes; 'tis so! huzza! huzza! (*Tossing up his hat.*)

Mr. COURTENAY.

You don't say so? the Colonel!

Old JASPER, (*with importance,*)

Aye, I should be glad you'd prove he's not come home, when I declare

70 THE RETURN

he is. You'd be a greater conjurer than myself, in that case.

Col. CHARLTON, (*shewing himself,*)

So my secret's got in very trusty hands! and I need only have relied on you, friend Jasper? (*Embracing Mr. Courtenay,*) Courtenay! my dear Courtenay! I rejoice to see you!

Mr. COURTENAY.

O my worthy Colonel! what a happy day for us!

Col. CHARLTON.

Provided Jasper's babbling does not overset my schemes.

Old JASPER.

You told me, sir, if you remember, Mr. Courtenay was already in the plot; and have I whisper'd it to any one but him?

FROM AMERICA. 71

Mr. COURTENAY.

Because you have not yet seen any one but me.

Col. CHARLTON.

We've not a moment's time to lose : and so, my good friend Jasper, listen ; you must hide me in your cottage, till I wish to show myself.

Old JASPER.

That's what I'll do with all my heart. Come, come ; and you'll be very heartily received.

Mr. COURTENAY.

But that's not all ; you must direct your son to keep strict watch, lest any one should go and tell your mistress, or the children, who you've got.

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Col. CHARLTON.

And take especial care too, no one comes into your house.

Old JASPER.

But then, if Madam, sir, or any of the children, should come down, and knock, I can't refuse to open.

Mr. COURTENAY.

O, but such a cunning fox as you, may easily start some pretext to keep them out.

Old JASPER.

You're in the right. I'll go and bind my wife to silence.

Mr. COURTENAY.

And pray, Jasper, let me have some flowers.

FROM AMERICA. 73

Old JASPER.

Don't make yourself uneasy. You shall have them. What, for——

Mr. COURTENAY.

You shall know to-morrow, what they're for : at present we've no time to lose. So gather them, and ask no questions.

SCENE IV.

Col. CHARLTON, Mr. COURTENAY.

Col. CHARLTON.

Is it your opinion, my dear Courtenay, Mrs. Charlton does not in the least suspect our preparations ?

74 *T H E R E T U R N*

Mr. COURTENAY.

I could never have conceal'd them from her: so I thought it better to admit her, as a partner, by insinuating she would certainly surprize you, in a very pleasing manner, on the day of your return. I've hinted your arrival may be yet protracted; and with pleasure, I can tell you, she regrets the tedious moments of your absence, by directing all her thoughts to prove, in these her preparations, how much your arrival will rejoice her.

Col. CHARLTON.

So that I shall be the giver of this entertainment, which she thinks will be *her* gift? Ah Courtenay, what debt I owe your ingenuity!

FROM AMERICA. 75

Mr. COURTENAY.

I hope you'll be content, with what we've done. There's not a creature round about us, but in some sort, has contributed to welcome your arrival. I have also had, for many days, in training, upwards of a score young people, of both sexes. I'll not tell you, what their parts are, but you'll find they know them to a tittle.

Col. CHARLTON.

And to crown the festival, I've brought with me, my eldest girl's Intended: by good luck, our vessel took a pirate ship from Algiers, that even durst attack us; and these cloaths were in the plunder. I've employ'd them to conceal myself and

others, as you'll see, that we might not be guest at.—I have music too on board; the band belonging to our regiment, who if wanted, will attend

Mr. COURTENAY.

We cannot chuse but want them having nothing but such music as the town affords; and that is but so so.

Col. CHARLTON.

I should be sorry, any thing were wanting at our festival; nor would I have a single creature, living in the meanest cot, on my estate, but who should leap for joy, on such a day as this is. Most rejoicing seasons, and to gratify the rich. The re-establishment of peace, not merely one

FROM AMERICA. 77

between a parent country and her children, but even any peace, in which the poor man is most interested, should be celebrated with so much solemnity, that he may prove how sensible, he is of the felicity of such an æra. He should long remember it, and often speak about it to his children, and those children's children. He will live, by such means, more contented with his situation, and appear the better patriot, and good subject.

Mr. COURTENAY.

O, my worthy Colonel ! you are still the same good man, I see. Wherever you appear, you spread beneficence and joy around you.

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Col. CHARLTON, (*grasping Courtenay's hand,*)

And pray tell me, is it not more grateful thus to spread beneficence and joy around me, as you say, than be the object benefited and rejoiced?

(*Here young Jasper is observ'd approaching cautiously along the hedge.*)

SCENE V.

Col. CHARLTON, Mr. COURTENAY,
and Young JASPER, (*with a basket of flowers,*)

Young JASPER.

THIS Turkish ghost must sure be very harmless, since he talks in such

a friendly manner, with the tutor;
and even takes him by the hand so
kindly!

Mr. COURTENAY.

Don't I hear a tread?

Col. CHARLTON.

I think I do; and therefore I'll
go hide myself behind the hedge here.

*(He draws near the hedge, and finds
himself exactly opposite young Jasper,
who looks at him, in a fit of trem-
bling: but soon recollecting him,
cries out,)*

'Tis my god-father! my good, dear,
god-father!

*(He drops his basket, and flings himself
at Col. Charlton's feet.)*

Col. CHARLTON.

So, so! hush! softly, softly!

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Mr. COURTENAY.

Yes, my little man. Your master won't have any body know he's come: so take care what you say, and don't go tell it.

Young JASPER.

What, sir, may not madam or the children know my master's here?

Mr. COURTENAY.

No: they particularly are not to hear any thing about it.

Old JASPER, (*coming in, and not at first perceiving young Jasper,*)

Come, sir, every thing's prepar'd for your reception: so pray follow me.—This path is best.

Young JASPER.

Ah, ah! my father's in the secret.

Yet,

FROM AMERICA. 81

Yet, it was not I, sir, told him.

Pray, let that be notic'd.

Old JASPER, (*perceiving the young one,*)

How! We're ruin'd, gentlemen!
This monkey will go tell the whole affair.—I thought to send him out upon a message, that he might not know it.

MR. COURTENAY.

There's no harm done yet; he'll be as secret as his father!—won't you so, my little fellow?

Young JASPER.

O, let me alone for that.—I fancy, father, I can keep a secret, if that's all, as well as other people. 'Tis not

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32 THE RETURN

the first time, I've kept my tongue within my teeth.

Old JASPER.

And when pray, firrah, did you hold your tongue?

Young JASPER.

When, father? Why last Monday, when you thrash'd me so, because I would not tell you I had stole the apples. Did I say I took them?

Old JASPER.

So, so, it was you then, you confess, that had them? Stay! stay! stay!
(*The little Jasper runs for refuge to the Colonel.*) Well, well, you're safe at present: I shall lace your jacket well to-morrow.

FROM AMERICA. 83

Mr. COURTENAY.

If he blabs our secret, then you may.

Col. CHARLTON.

And if he does not, there's a golden guinea for him.

Old JASPER.

There ! young Graceless : did you hear ?—a golden guinea !

Young JASPER.

Pooh !—I should have kept my master's secret, just as well, for nothing, out of love !

Mr. COURTENAY.

But, Jasper, can we place as much reliance on your wife's discretion ?

Old JASPER.

On my wife's ! O, let there be

84 THE RETURN

but any thing to get, and you shall find she's tongue-tied. Would you think it? I don't know a third of what her husband should. — Come, come.—but (*to young Jasper*) stay you here, lest any body should come down the garden and surprize us. But remember should you speak a word, beware the apples! I'll cut both your ears off, with my master's cutlafs. (*They all go out but young Jasper.*)

Young JASPER, (*alone and taking up his basket,*)

If they stay to know it, till I tell 'em, they'll stay long enough! But yet Miss Flavia, Miss Penelope, Miss Emma, and their brother Master

FROM AMERICA. 85

Edmund! I'm quite griev'd, they must not know the news. Suppose I were to whisper it by stealth, then, in Miss Emma's ear? I love Miss Emma! she's the youngest, but the wittiest. Yes indeed! a pretty piece of work! for then Miss Emma would go tell Miss Flavia; and Miss Flavia Miss Penelope; and Miss Penelope her brother! and her brother his Mama! as sure as I am Jasper: and so every body, then, would know the secret; and a guinea would be lost, and both my ears to boot!—Well I had better then be dummy; for as long as I don't speak a word, so long I shan't tell any body.—That's quite certain! so there's for you,

36 THE RETURN

(*striking his mouth*) nail'd fast up!—
Hush! hush!—

SCENE VI.

Young JASPER, EDMUND, PENE-
LOPE, and EMMA.

EDMUND, (*tapping Jasper on the
shoulder,*)

GOOD morrow, friend.

PENELOPE, (*making a bow in ridi-
cule,*)

Your very humble servant, Mr.
Jasper!

EMMA, (*taking him by the hand,*)

Well, how goes it, little man?

FROM AMERICA. 87

(*Jasper holds her out a nosegay : Emma takes it.*) What ! all alone ! (*Jasper answers with a nod.*)

EMMA.

Mama has sent us for your father, to come up and speak with her. Where is he ? (*Jasper shows her with his finger.*)

PENELOPE.

Do you mean to play the fool with us?—Or can't you speak ? (*Jasper gives no answer, but looks up.*)

EDMUND.

Well, but Jasper, speak.

PENELOPE, (*giving him a slap,*)

Take that : I'll teach you how to mum it !

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EMMA, (*stopping her,*)

Softly, softly, sister ; pray don't hurt my little Jasper.

EDMUND, (*rather angry,*)

Let him speak ; or else, I'll——Is he dumb ?

PENELOPE.

Or deaf ?

EMMA.

How violent you are ! he may have met with some misfortune ! Have you Colin ? (*he shakes his head as if to answer no, and Edmund with Penelope, both fall upon him ; shake, pull, pinch, and tickle him, and say,*) Come, come ; you shall speak, or tell us why you're silent.

EMMA, (*getting in between them,*)

Sister ! Edmund ! let him go ; or I shall side with Jasper.

FROM AMERICA. 89

PENELOPE.

O, he'll have a doughty champion
to defend him !

EMMA.

Brother, you're the eldest. Make
Penelope leave off; and I'll speak
gently to him. I am sure, he'll an-
swer me.

EDMUND.

No, no: I'll make him answer *me*,
when I speak to him.

EMMA.

One word only—(*to Jasper*) Jas-
per! my poor Jasper! answer me,
do, pray; though but a single word.
(*Jasper smiles, but lets her understand,
he does not mean to speak*) You won't
oblige me?—Well, but do you know,
you'll put me in a passion likewise?—

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But what fools we are! why don't we rather go ourselves to Jasper, since Mama is waiting for him? Go, Penelope; we'll follow you.—That way he pointed: He's at home, at dinner, very likely.

PENELOPE.

Yes, let's go and tell his father he won't speak: he'll make him find his tongue. (*She goes out, but Jasper stops the way, and shakes his head.*)

EDMUND.

How now! does he presume to stop my sister?

EMMA, (*stopping Edmund,*)

Don't you see, he's careful not to hurt her. — Well then, Jasper, go yourself, and tell your father in our stead, Mama is in the house, and wants

FROM AMERICA. 91

on't see him. — Will you? (*Jasper*
nce *consent, and leaves the children,*
Pe- *who all three look after him.*)

PENELOPE.

er, Well, he hears at least, if he has
st his tongue.

EMMA.

he For my part, I was certain he would
his do what I desir'd him.

EDMUND.

stop He has done extremely well in
going; but I promise you, I'll pay
him well to-morrow. (*Jasper at a dis-*
nce, *is perceiv'd as looking for his fa-*
er; and the children in the mean-
time fortunately spy him out at work, in
gathering flowers for Mr. Courtenay, in
another quarter of the garden.)

EMMA.

But see, yonder, where he is : let's
run ourselves, and tell him. We
shall know too what's the matter with
my little friend.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Old JASPER, (*speaking to his son, who
has that moment left him,*)

WELL, well; I shall take care,
and go: but mind you what I've
said.—As soon as one's dismiss'd, three
others are upon me. (*To the chil-
dren who come running in,*) Little
gentlefolks, good morrow to you all!
How goes it?

EMMA.

Very well: but tell us, what has happen'd to your son, my little Jasper?

Old JASPER.

What has happen'd to him, Lady? do you mean to ask, because he has so heartily?

EMMA.

He is not ill then?

Old JASPER.

Ill! what he?

EDMUND.

He's very faucy then!

PENELOPE.

Would you believe it? he has play'd the fool with us all three!

Old JASPER.

How! play'd the fool?

FROM AMERICA. 95

EMMA.

We thought he might have lost
his tongue.

Old JASPER.

What he ?

PENELOPE.

We fell upon him, shook, pull'd,
pinch'd, and tickled him ; but not a
word.

Old JASPER.

You don't say so ? For my part, I
can tell you, little folks, he almost
stunn'd me with his noise this morn-
ing ; and if ever I had known what
fear was, would have frighten'd me
to death.

EDMUND.

He would not answer us a single
word.

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Old JASPER, (*with a smile,*)

You don't say so? The little hang-dog! Do but think, how cunning! why, he's wittier ten times over than his father!

EMMA.

Wittier! what, because he does not speak?

Old JASPER.

But, where can he have got this notion?

PENELOPE.

Notion?

Old JASPER.

And they'll tell us, after all, the world grows duller every day. For my part, I'll maintain it, children

now

FROM AMERICA. 97

now-a-days, have much more wit,
than all their family together.

PENELOPE.

They are both turn'd fools, I fancy.
One says nothing, and the other nothing to the purpose.

Old JASPER.

O he knew, Miss, what he did not
say ; and I know likewise what I *do*.

PENELOPE.

That's more than we know then.

Old JASPER.

No matter as to that ; but pray,
where's madam ? Jasper told me I
was wanted.

EDMUND.

Ah ! he told you, did he ?

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EMMA.

So it seems, he speaks then?

EDMUND.

If the case is so, I'll make him find his tongue for me too.

PENELOPE.

Let's go find him out.—

Old JASPER.

Aye! aye! make haste! He's far enough by this time! You'll not even see his heels. He has two legs, you'll find so, though he should not have a tongue. (*Edmund and Penelope go out.*)

EMMA.

They're gone; and now my dear good man, pray bid young Jasper answer me; I love to hear him talk!

Old JASPER.

Yes, yes; let me alone. I will;

FROM AMERICA. 99

and he shall answer you ; and so will I ; and we'll all answer one another. Yes, depend upon it, Miss, we will ; and we shall soon have answerers enough.

EMMA.

Good ! good ! I'll now run after Edmund and my sister, and prevent their vexing Jasper.

Old JASPER, (*alone*,)

I was in the right, to send him off ! those chatterboxes would have very quickly got the secret from him ! And yet only think ! who'll say he's not a deep one ? play the dummy ! And why, pray ? for fear of blabbing what he knows !—Did ever any body hear the like ! but here comes Ma-

100 *THE RETURN*

dam and Miss Flavia. I must have a care now of myself. A man who's bound to secrecy between two women!—Heavens! I don't know any situation half so trying!

SCENE II.

Old JASPER, Mrs. CHARLTON, and
FLAVIA.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

JASPER, I must come, I see, myself to find you, after having sent the children half an hour ago?

Old JASPER.

And I was coming Madam.

FROM AMERICA. 101

Mrs. CHARLTON.

What I wanted, was to tell you, we must once again get every thing in order for our entertainment: Mr. Courtenay says, he should be glad to go through a rehearsal of the whole, this afternoon. Perhaps he only wishes to employ my thoughts, while I am swallow'd up in expectation of the Colonel, who, he tells me, cannot now be long away. This thought, that seems as if it hasten'd his return—

Old JASPER.

Aye! aye! and very likely, my good lady, even at present, he is not at such a distance as some people think him. What for instance, would you say—

(*apart*) But what was I about to say myself?—

Mrs. CHARLTON.

At such a distance as some people think him, Jasper!—What does that mean, pray? Have you, by chance, heard any news about the Colonel?

Old JASPER.

Any news about him! O, what I know of the matter is much surer than report—(*apart*) but what the deuce is come to me? I can't help blabbing every thing!

Mrs. CHARLTON.

What means all this, my good friend Jasper, pray explain yourself.—

Old JASPER.

I mean that—look ye, Madam,—do you understand me?—I mean that

FROM AMERICA. 103

when the market's over, I come home as quick as legs will carry me, and yet I have not either such a wife as, (begging pardon, Madam) you, or such a daughter as Miss Flavia.—(*apart*) Humph! no bad come off. (*aloud*) And so, I judge, my master's making likewise all the haste he can to Plymouth. Yes, that's certain.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

When will that delightful moment comethat I shall fold him in my arms?

Old JASPER.

Who knows indeed? but I, for my part, will make haste, and that will bring him home the sooner. I was wishing, just this moment, every puff

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of breath I take in these same preparations, were a puff of wind to blow his ship home;—and particularly so, since with my worthy master, we should have, you know Miss Flavia, your intended. (*Flavia smiles.*)

Mrs. CHARLTON.

Well, my good friend Jasper, this is quite obliging in you!

Old JASPER.

O the truth is, I am vex'd to see you both so sad; and yet I can with truth compare you to my flowers in spring, when there has been a shower: you're beautiful in tears. Well, come a day of sun-shine! and those tears will all be dried, and you appear more charming still! But courage! courage! here comes Mr. do you understand me. — — —

FROM AMERICA. 105

Courtenay : he at least seems very happy !

SCENE III.

Mrs. CHARLTON, FLAVIA, Old JASPER, and Mr. COURTENAY.

Mr. COURTENAY.

EVERY thing goes on as well as we could wish, dear Madam. I have got together the young folks that are to make a figure in our entertainment ; and 'tis almost ready to begin. I could not but be satisfied with the exactitude and order they gave proof of,

106 THE RETURN

at the last rehearsal ; and to-day, I hope the general repetition will please you as much, if you but condescend to grace it with your presence.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

I shall not deprive myself of such an entertainment. When the affair is over, I am sure I shall have reason to express my satisfaction at your zeal and taste. I would have seen your previous preparations, but in compliment to your opinion, kept away. You tell me I may now be present at it. When at school, I never long'd so much for Whitsuntide or Christmas.

Mr. COURTENAY.

Your impatience to behold my humble preparations, is the greatest recompence I can receive, for having

FROM AMERICA. 107

meant them as I have ; but am I not sufficiently repaid for all my care and labour, in the thought of seconding your views and wishes, and preventing those the Colonel too must have ? He would have certainly been griev'd, if an event, so happy for the country, and his tenants in particular, should not have been in such a manner celebrated, as to fix it in the recollection even of their youngest children.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

Such, indeed, I must acknowledge is his character : and therefore, what agreeable ideas now, while I am speaking, do I not give way to, touching his surprise and satisfaction, when he comes himself to be a witness to your preparations ?

Old JASPER.

O, my dear good lady! as for that, it won't be he that will give proof of most surprise and satisfaction at this *fete shampeter*, as I heard it call'd this morning. (*Mr. Courtenay winks, that he may hold his tongue.*)

Mrs. CHARLTON.

What?

Old JASPER, (*in confusion,*)

I mean that—as to—your surprise and satisfaction. You, good madam, in the first place, will be very much surprised and satisfied to see him safe return'd, and full of health and spirits; and Miss Flavia, you too will be very much surprised and satisfied to see your dear intended. Look ye, Madam, if I durst make such an of-

FROM AMERICA. 109

fer, I would lay my spade against a crooked pin, she'll blush like any strawberry. And we too shall be much surprised and satisfied, as any servants would be, at the sight of such a master.

MR. COURTENAY.

Ah, dear madam, how your heart would be delighted, did you know with what impatience every body living round about expects him ! I can hardly take a step, but twenty people ask me when we look for his arrival ; and I think I hear a numerous family make enquiry for their father, brother, son, or husband. You should see how many women, and even little children, make up garlands, and come hither with them to the statue your

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affection has erected to him in the garden. Think then, what will be their feelings when they see him?

Mrs. CHARLTON.

Yes; I can conceive their transports, by my own. But when will he return? I shall not cease to tremble for his safety, till I know him out of danger.

Mr. COURTENAY.

But why tremble? His desire of glory cannot now expose him to new perils.

FLAVIA.

Ah, Mama! you recollect those dismal days, when we could never take a paper up, without the dread of reading melancholy news. We thought we

FROM AMERICA. 111

were to see his name in every list of dead and wounded.

Mr. COURTENAY.

Let all these impressions now give way to joy. Peace takes away all ground for future apprehension.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

Yes; and therefore on my knees, I bless this peace. I bless it in the name of every wife and mother.

Old JASPER.

And I likewise in the name of every gardener. Ah, if you had mov'd about, as I have, what would you have said, in that case?—Look ye, in the last rebellion I bore arms ;—or how could I have digg'd and delv'd? for I was then a gardener in the North of England. There were soldiers in

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the neighbourhood ; and would you think it, gentlefolks, in half an hour they did not leave a single hedge throughout the country ! Why they broke the fences, came into your gardens, and those things there, such as—let me see—your *Loves*, your *Jupiters*, your *Hercules's*, why they made no more ado, but took 'em by the nose, and down they went, heels uppermost. But what was that to me ? I should have laugh'd, if all your heathen gods, and so forth, had been sent a packing to Old Nick ; but then my poor asparagus ! my charming melons ! my nice pines ! to see how *they* were treated ! Oh, it almost broke my heart ! and yet I was, at that time, nothing but

FROM AMERICA. 113

but a gardener's man. Judge, therefore, what would be my situation now, that I'm a master, should the like fall out again! I should go drown myself, at once, I fancy, in the well. But Heaven be prais'd we've peace! so joy! joy! joy! I say: and pray, good Mr. Courtenay, come and tell me how I'm to dispose of this.

SCENE IV.

Mrs. CHARLTON, FLAVIA.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

THE gaiety of honest Jasper makes
me likewise merry; and I find myself
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at present more at ease. I feel hope spring within me. Yes, my dearest Flavia, something whispers to my heart we are to see them very soon.

FLAVIA.

Alas, Mama, of late I have awak'd each morning with the hope within me likewise, but as often been deluded,

Mrs. CHARLTON.

Our complaints of Providence are universally unjust. How often have I not accus'd this cruel war of keeping, for so many years, your father distant from me? and at length peace once again restores him, full of honour, gain'd by the performance of his duty: he returns too, when his presence is so needful for the edu-

FROM AMERICA. 115

cation of his children. He brings home the object of your choice on board his vessel ; and, thus situated, shall we murmur at a little absence still ? Ah, Flavia ! let me tell you, multitudes of women in the world have cause to envy us our lot.

FLAVIA.

Yes, yes, Mama ; I know I am to blame ; but your attention hitherto, has render'd me so happy ! I am therefore much less able to support the least abatement in my happiness.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

Embrace me, and resume your cheerfulness that so becomes you. Let us not, with our inquietude, infect that pleasure the good people round about us are to share in.

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SCENE V.

Mrs. CHARLTON, FLAVIA, EDMUND, PENELOPE, EMMA, and SPRINGFIELD, (*leaning upon Edmund, while the ladies come to meet him.*)

EMMA, (*running to her mother,*)

SEE, Mama; see, here's the good old Springfield we have brought you.

PENELOPE, (*following her,*)

Yes, yes; here he is!

EDMUND.

Lean more upon my shoulder: you don't hurt me in the least.

FROM AMERICA. 117

FLAVIA,

Be slow, my honest Springfield.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

Take care you don't fall!

SPRINGFIELD.

Our children, Madam, have been bid to put their Sunday cloaths on, and come hither : is our worthy master then arriv'd ? I should not easily forgive myself, if he were come before me.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

No, my friend ; but we expect him hourly, I may say.

SPRINGFIELD.

So much the better, Madam. And he'll come on shore immediately. My head is good enough, but 'tis my legs

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that fail me. I must needs set out before the rest, if I would meet him on the way.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

You would not surely go and meet him, feeble as you are !

SPRINGFIELD.

Not go and meet him? What! and should I wait his coming? I, who always found him ready to prevent my wishes! I would rather have my children carry me, than fail in such a point of duty.

FLAVIA.

No, good Springfield; my Papa would take it very ill, I'm sure, should you endure so much fatigue for his sake.

FROM AMERICA. 119

SPRINGFIELD.

Not for his sake, but my own, young lady. It is I that want to see him. He is like the sun: he comforts my old age.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

But at your years, my friend?

SPRINGFIELD.

The more I am in years, the greater far my obligations: for I've known him, Madam, much much longer than yourself. A hundred times, I've put him, when a child, across this very stick: nor was he quite so tall as Mr. Edmund, when I had him for a benefactor. I was poor then, Madam; nor had he more money than his parents thought sufficient for his little pleasures. Well,

120 *T H E R E T U R N*

even then, he us'd to lighten my necessities. It was in vain, I only told him half my wants: he had an understanding, and could guess the half I hid. As soon as he was master of his patrimony, he presented me, most generously, with the cottage I now live in, with a field contiguous to it; and whenever Providence was pleas'd to bless me with a child, gave where-withal to keep it. Thanks to his benevolence, I have been able to bring up my family in credit: therefore I consider it, in some sort, his as well as mine.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

Whatever he has done for your advantage, sprung from his attachment to you, which has been of such an

FROM AMERICA. 121

ancient standing : and even now, he writes few letters home, in which he does not make enquiry of your welfare.

SPRINGFIELD.

Is that true ? But why should it be otherwise ? and let me say, he owes me the enquiry. He has been a friend in general to all his tenants : At his own expence, re-built their cottages, when inundations had laid waste the country, and subsisted them and theirs, in scanty seasons. I would have them reverence and bless him, for such goodness ; and yet surely I should die with sorrow, if I knew, that after his relations, any one could love him more than I do. What I

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say now, my good lady, is for you; and you my beautiful Miss Flavia like-wise. (*they express their satisfaction by their looks.*)

The CHILDREN, (*jumping round about him,*)

And us also, Springfield.

SPRINGFIELD.

O, I can't but love you also: and yet frequently you make me angry with you.

EMMA.

Angry with us, we?

SPRINGFIELD.

Yes, you, my little ones. You pay me more attention than you ought: that vexes me; as sometimes I

FROM AMERICA. 123

you; imagine, folks will think me so much
like. older for it.

EMMA.

Old! why you're a chicken yet to
others.—Look ye, here's my nose-
gay.—There. (*putting it in his but-
ton-hole.*)—and now, you're quite a
macarony!

PENELOPE.

Let me have your hat. I'll be
your sweet-heart; and this ribband,
you shall say, I gave you as a fa-
vour.

EDMUND, (*rising on his toe to whisper
him,*)

You And I'll get Papa, when he comes
you come, to give you some of that nice
me I wine you know of.

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SPRINGFIELD.

Dear sweet little creatures! You are *heart* all over like your father. Come, and let me have you in my arms.—Forgive my liberty, good madam.

Mrs. CHARLTON.

It is I request it of you. Nothing, in my thoughts, can be so charming, as to see my children in the embraces of so honest an old man; it is the picture of no less than innocence and virtue.

(*The children run to Springfield; he embraces them; and in the interval they hear the sound of music, at a distance.*)

FROM AMERICA. 125

SPRINGFIELD.

What's that music, Madam? Can it be the Colonel?

Mrs. CHARLTON.

No, my friend: the children you were speaking of, are come, with others to rehearse their parts, in our intended entertainment.

SPRINGFIELD.

O, I'll see it. I was once a figurer in such affairs: at present, I can hardly follow where I us'd to lead, as briskly as the liveliest of them. Let me go and prop myself against that tree. I planted it myself, when I was yet a child. We were at that time almost of an age; but now, 'tis much the youngest.

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Mrs. CHARLTON.

No, no, Springfield; you shall come
and sit here down beside me.

FLAVIA.

Yes, between us.

SPRINGFIELD.

I have such an honour in the face
of every one, who comes to see your
entertainment!

Mrs. CHARLTON.

And why not? they'll learn, by
our example, to respect old age and
virtue. Come, my friend. (*Mrs. Charl-
ton and the eldest daughter bring him to
their seat, and place themselves on either
side him; while the children smooth
his cloaths, and otherwise give signs of
their affection.*)

N FROM AMERICA. 127

SPRINGFIELD, (*wiping his eyes,*)

I com Provided I don't die of joy, before
my worthy master can return!

ne face
e you
rn, by
age and
. Char
g him
n either
/smooth
signs of
(*Enter on both sides boys and girls, that
come together in the middle, two
and two, proceeding up the stage with
music. They pass by the bench, where
Mrs. Charlton, with her children,
and the farmer sit; while some
among them sing the following songs.*)

A I R I.

Let the tabor and shrill flute
Strike up their enlivening din:
Peace—now war's loud throat is mute,
Bids the dance begin.

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S O L O.

O peace ! O peace ! O grateful peace !
Thou com'st our grief to stay ;
To bid the world's late troubles cease,
And wash our tears away.

To scourge two nations, one of late,
War rais'd our deadly arms ;
Now, happy day that quells all hate !
Peace bids us taste her charms.

C H O R U S.

Take, Americans, our hand ;
Throw your weapons by ;
Henceforth, as a festive band,
Bidding discord die.

A I R

A I R II.

peace.
;
cease
In future, should a foe draw near,
And challenge me to fight,
His surly message I'll not hear,
But let him stay till night ;

late,
I hate!
ns.
Then bid the feast be spread, and round
Go mirth, with dance and song ;
And with a brimmer, on the ground,
Soon lay him all along.

C H O R U S.

Peace ! Peace ! Peace ! War's put
to flight !

So let's sing ;
Sing, and dance in airy ring ;
Dance and sing all day, and drink all
night.

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A I R III.

For wherefore should the murd'ring
sword
Doom to grim death so many a hearty
fellow?
When we may seek the festive
board,
And of good living die, quite flush
and mellow?

C H O R U S.

With tearful eyes,
And bosom sighs,
Peace, we invok'd thy sway:
And ev'ry swain,
In ev'ry plain,
Now tunes the roundelay.

FROM AMERICA. 131

Peace, power divine,
For our returning joys, the praise is
thine.

S O L O.

Let the pipe and tabor's sound,
Both assist the vocal lay;
And in bands of peace be found
England and America.

*(They dance ; the music ceases here, the
train present their flowers to Mrs.
Charlton, Springfield, Flavia, and
the other children.)*

Mrs. CHARLTON.

O my friends, I'm penetrated with
the joy you feel on this occasion, and

could only wish my worthy spouse were present to partake it with me.

EMMA.

O Mama, if he were here!—What would you say to that, good Springfield?

SPRINGFIELD.

I verily believe I should forget my age, and fall a dancing with the pleasure of it.

(Here a march without; the scene draws and discovers Colonel Charlton on a pedestal, and still concealed beneath his Algerine disguise, except the turban. Mr. Courtenay and the Jaspers stand close by him.)

(Mrs. Charlton, Springfield, Flavia, and the other children gaze at one another, and the figure on the pede-

FROM AMERICA. 133

flal, by turns; till Edmynd knows his father, and cries out,)

'Tis Papa!

PENELOPE and EMMA.

Yes! yes! 'tis he indeed!

(Mrs. Charlton, Flavia and the farmer rise together, and spring forward. The disguise now falling off from Colonel Charlton, shows him in his uniform. He instantly leaps down, receives his wife and daughter, and embraces them with ardour.)

Mrs. CHARLTON.

My dearest life!

FLAVIA.

My dearest father!

The CHILDREN, *(getting round him,)*

Well, 'tis our turn now, Papa: embrace us likewise.

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Col. CHARLTON.

I would gladly take you all at once into my arms, dear wife and children!

Mrs. CHARLTON.

We are much too kind, to love you after such an artifice as this: but what's the meaning of it?

Col. CHARLTON,

'Tis a scheme suggested by your son-in-law that is to be. At present he's on board our ship: he could not leave it to come with me. Soon I'll tell you all; and when he gets on shore, surrender him to your revenge. —He longs to see you, Flavia; and returns to England worthy of you. (*Flavia smiles and blushes.*) On the morrow he'll be here;—but don't I

FROM AMERICA. 135

see my old friend Springfield? (*He embraces him.*)

SPRINGFIELD.

I have tried till now, in vain, to speak, so much was I intoxicated as it were with joy! It seems then, I have once more seen you, after such an absence. Let me die, whenever Providence thinks proper; I shall die content.

Col. CHARLTON.

No, dear Springfield, you must live; and this same day shall make you ten years younger. Wife, I thank you for the honour and respect you've shown him. Possibly there's not in all the country, such another upright man, nor can our family be

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ever in possession of a worthier friend,
Besides, 'tis on rejoicing days for national advantages like this, we should most honour those who have, like Springfield, serv'd it more than others. (*he turns to those in the procession*) And my friends and children, be you well assur'd I'm glad again to see you. I am fix'd for life at length among you. War has hitherto prevented me from doing you, together with your friends and parents, all the good I could have wish'd: but peace will furnish me in future with the means. Let us then only think of making one another happy. You, by wishing to become so, shall evince you're grateful. I desire no more from any of you. (*A general cry is heard of*)

FROM AMERICA. 137

end, "What a noble gentleman! Long live
na- the worthy Colonel, and Heaven prof-
ould per all his family!"

Col. CHARLTON.

And you, too, my own children,
And be you happy also; and especially
well rejoice at present. You have treated
. I me; and now my turn is come to do
you. the same for you. We shall not
from want refreshments. Every thing is
iends ready.

Mr. COURTENAY.

fur- Madam, it was our intention to
eans. surprize the Colonel; but the Colo-
aking el, as you find, has been too active
thing r us.

Old JASPER.

ny of O, I don't know any one that can
l of) greater claim to merit than my-

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self upon a day like this ! and in particular, to that of being silent.

Young JASPER.

But what think you, father, then of me ?

EMMA.

Ho ! ho ! you've found your tongue, at last ?

Young JASPER.

Yes, yes ; so boast as much as you think proper, father. I have been a long time silent, and make up by having now, if you'll permit me, my good master (*to the Colonel*) the last word. So strike up, pipe and tabor, and let's have a dance.

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